

Press release: Traffic officers praised as dog Bailey comes home

Donna Gilmore, 31, of New Lane, Eccles, who suffers from cystic fibrosis, was understandably distraught when Bailey, her 2-year-old Shi Tzu, disappeared from the house, not far from the M60, earlier this month.

A few days later, after a search of the area and a social media campaign from Donna's friends and family had failed to bring Bailey home, a dog was spotted near junction 12 of the motorway by Highways England traffic officers Mark Wellman and Dave Lavelle.

Mark and Dave, who both work at the Rob Lane outstation at Newton-le-Willows, spotted the dog on the wrong side of the safety barriers on a bridge overlooking the eastbound M62, on the approach to the M60. Traffic was temporarily stopped for everyone's safety and so Bailey could be retrieved. He was taken away to be checked by a vet – while the search for its owner began.

Dave, 58, from Davyhulme in Trafford, said:

We had heard reports of a dog in the area over a few days so we were keeping a look out for safety reasons as much as anything as stray animals can cause drivers to swerve and brake suddenly, leading to collisions. "At the time we spotted him, we had no idea it was Bailey but we posted a picture on Twitter hoping someone would recognise him and – to cut quite a long story short – a police officer I know and whose daughter is a friend of Donna's made the connection.

And Mark, 51, from Warrington, added:

We dropped Bailey back home at the weekend – he was a bit dishevelled but none the worse for his 6 day adventure – and of course Donna was absolutely thrilled.

Dave and I are just glad we were able to help. Pets do occasionally stray onto the motorway and unfortunately some get killed – but even in those cases Highways England works hard to reunite pets with their owners and deal with each case as sensitively as possible.

There was an added bonus – Bailey's return also reunited him with his 10-month-old son Fudge.

Detective Sergeant Hayden Roberts, the dad of Donna's friend Cerian, has now

written to Highways England on behalf of Donna to thank Mark and Dave for their efforts.

He said:

The Twitter picture got back to me via Cerian who hoped I could find out where Bailey had been taken to. I happened to know Dave from a previous job so as a longshot I contacted him – but I had no idea he had actually been involved in Bailey's rescue!

Dave called me back a short time later with the details that Bailey had been taken to the RSPCA in Salford I was able to call my daughter and an overjoyed Donna to give them the good news.

Donna and my daughter asked me to write thank Dave and Mark for the outstanding and caring service they have provided. This is definitely a story with a very happy ending!

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.